

From: Chris Wood
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/11/02 11:40pm
Subject: Make an informed decision

I just spent 9 days trying to make a Microsoft Windows 2000 server work with a Unix SAMBA server. (SAMBA is an NT4 compatible open source protocol so that windows users can access unix file systems as if they were windows file systems.) If you research the history of Samba and the nightmares they have had trying to figure out how Microsoft uses the SMB protocol, you will quickly see the efforts Microsoft goes through to break the Samba compatibility. Each time a new version of windows comes out, it is just different enough to cause problems for Samba/Unix administrators. As an administrator, once you spend 9 days trying to find a problem (and the problem is directly related to microsoft keeping the protocols secret and changing the protocols) you curse Microsoft. After cursing them, you realize why some companies only use Microsoft -- because MS has made it near impossible to use anything else but them.

The second thing to consider is the same tactics related to MS Office. Each version uses a new format (which again is secret). Not only does this make it near impossible to use Corel Office, et al, it also forces customers to upgrade MS Office when a new version comes out because the old version is not compatible with the new version. Our company has to share files with other companies and if we can't open their files, then we can't do business with them. If they use MS Office, then we have to be able to support that too. We have been trying to use Corel Office which is a fraction of the cost, but the inability to keep up with Microsoft's file format changes might force us to drop \$50,000 into getting 200 users onto MS Office.

Now, not only does MS force you to upgrade... most companies prefer to upgrade their office applications every 4 years, but Microsoft's new licensing policies will require companies to upgrade every 2 years.

Where are the choices for the users? Sure, you can choose other options but you may not remain in business if you do because of the external forces of MS as I listed above. Beware .Net, the new Comcast/ATT cable deal, Xbox, ERP things they are planning, etc, and you have an ever more dangerous MS. Don't just think of punishing their past, but controlling their current actions and future actions. They are more of a threat right now than they ever have been. The current DOJ proposal's are the equivalent of dropping the case. A \$1 billion dollar cash penalty plus restrictions still may not stop them (do you realize how much cash they have in the bank?) and the current proposal doesn't even get near this.

Chris

